

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 29, 2004. Claims 3, 4, 18, 19, 22, 23, 71-73, 99, 100, 102, 103, and 105-109 are now pending. Claims 3, 4, 18, 19, 22, 23, 71-73, 99, 100, 102, 103, and 105 have been amended. Claims 1, 5, 7, 20, 24, 26, 95-98, 101, and 104 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter (Claims 2, 6, 8-17, 21, 25, 27-70, and 74-94 were cancelled previously). Claims 106-109 have been added, and correspond to former Claims 95-98, respectively. Claims 3, 4, 22, 23, 99, 100, 102, and 103 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 5, 24, 101, and 104 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 1, 5, 7, 20, 24, 26, 101 and 104 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over either JP 10-58668, JP 11-25852, U.S. Patent 6,060,113 (*Banno et al.*), or EP 736890, in combination with JP 10-5654 or JP 06-163449.

Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, the rejected claims have been canceled, thereby rendering their rejections moot.

The Office Action states that Claims 3, 4, 22, 23, 99, 100, 102, and 103 would be allowable “if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph . . . and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.” However, none of those claims was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, in the Office Action. Also, each claim has been amended to be placed in

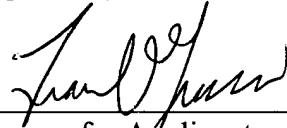
independent form and, is believed to be in full compliance with Section 112, second paragraph. As such, each claim is believed to be in condition for allowance.¹

The other claims remaining in this application each depend from one or another of the foregoing allowable claims, and also are believed to be in condition for allowance, at least for the reason that each depends from an allowable base claim.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹/ It is noted that "one or" has been deleted before "some" in Claims 4, 23, 100, and 103. Other minor changes also have been made to various ones of the pre-existing claims. Nonetheless, the subject matter of those claims is still believed to be patentable.